

FGCU Scholars

Advancing Writing, Critical
Thinking, and Information Literacy



Florida Gulf Coast University
Quality Enhancement Plan
Definitions, Models, and Proposals

Part I: Background



- ❧ Definition of a Quality Enhancement Plan
- ❧ Outline of the Process for Gathering QEP Topics
- ❧ Outline of the Selected Topic for the QEP
- ❧ Description of the QEP Steering Committee
- ❧ Outline of the QEP Working Groups

Part II: Proposals and Ideas for Discussion

The Quality Enhancement Plan



- ❧ Mandated by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS)
- ❧ Focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning
- ❧ Includes broad-based involvement in the development and implementation
- ❧ Identifies goals and a plan to assess achievement
- ❧ Appropriates required resources for implementation.

The Quality Enhancement Plan



❧ FGCU's First QEP

- ❧ Developing an Ecological Perspective and Fostering Community Involvement

- ❧ Five Year Implementation and Assessment: 2005-2010

❧ FGCU's Second QEP

- ❧ Development of Topic, Focus, and Plan: 2011-2014

- ❧ Five Year Implementation and Assessment: 2015-2020

FGCU's QEP Process



- ❧ Phase One: Gathering topics from the FGCU community
 - ❧ Began Fall 2011
 - ❧ At the end of Phase One, four topics were selected for further development
- ❧ Phase Two: Development of Four Topics
 - ❧ Technology, Undergraduate Research, Student Engagement, and Writing/Critical Thinking/Literacy
 - ❧ At the end of Phase Two, two topics were forwarded to the Provost and one was selected

FGCU's QEP Topic



Writing, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy

- ❧ To improve writing, critical thinking, and information literacy
- ❧ Across the curriculum and in all levels of instruction, including Composition courses and the General Education Program along with the majors
- ❧ To develop a robust, university-wide understanding of writing, critical thinking, and information literacy
- ❧ To develop ambitious and standardized assessment of these outcomes

QEP Steering Committee



Kevin Aho	College of Arts and Sciences	Megan Just	Student Representative
Tom Bevins	College of Health Professions and Social Work	Carrie Kerekes	Lutgert College of Business
Carol Bledsoe	Writing Center	Tanya Kunberger	U.A. Whitaker College of Engineering
Anne-Marie Bouche	College of Arts and Sciences	Jameson Moschella	University Housing/FYRE Program
Anna Carlin	Library Services	Stacey Parker	Center for Academic Achievement
Peter Cuderman	Student Government President	Linda Rowland	College of Arts and Sciences
Sarah Davis	Colloquium	Linda Serro	College of Education
Kris De Welde	General Education	Jim Wohlpart (Chair)	Dean of Undergraduate Studies
Jackie Greene	College of Education	Anne Young	Advisor, College of Health Professions and Social Work
Anna Haney-Withrow	College of Arts and Sciences		

QEP Working Groups



Curriculum Design Working Group

- ❧ Linda Serro, facilitator (College of Education, Director TLAI)
- ❧ Jackie Greene, College of Education
- ❧ Anne-Marie Bouché, College of Arts and Sciences

Writing Working Group

- ❧ Carol Bledsoe and Linda Rowland, facilitators (College of Arts and Sciences)
- ❧ Carrie Kerekes, College of Business
- ❧ billy Gunnels, College of Arts and Sciences
- ❧ Kristoph Kinzli, College of Engineering
- ❧ Mary Romanowski, College of Arts and Sciences
- ❧ Anna Haney-Withrow, College of Arts and Sciences
- ❧ Matt Jacobs and Megan Just, Students

QEP Working Groups



Critical Thinking Working Group

- ❧ Kevin Aho, facilitator (College of Arts and Sciences)
- ❧ Mohamad Al-Hakim, Brandon Hollingshead, Anne-Marie Bouche, College of Arts and Sciences
- ❧ Tanya Kunberger, Whitaker College of Engineering
- ❧ Tom Bevins, Karen Landy, Anne Young, College of Health Professions and Social Work
- ❧ Sarah Davis, Undergraduate Studies

Information Literacy Working Group

- ❧ Anna Carlin (Library) and Jackie Greene (College of Education), facilitators
- ❧ Heather Snapp, Library
- ❧ Frances Davey, College of Arts and Sciences

FGCU's QEP Process



- ❧ Spring 2013 – Steering Committee completes research, gathers feedback, narrows the plan
- ❧ Fall 2013 – Steering Committee writes draft focus for the plan with implementation strategies and budget and gathers further feedback from the faculty
- ❧ Spring 2014 – Steering Committee finalizes the plan
- ❧ Fall 2015 – Spring 2020 – FGCU's QEP implemented

Part II: Proposals for a Plan



- ❧ Discussion of Guiding Principles
- ❧ Discussion of Ideas for FGCU's QEP

FGCUScholars

Advancing Writing, Critical Thinking,
and Information Literacy

Guiding Principles



Create a QEP that:

- ❧ Is owned across the university in all undergraduate programs and the General Education Program;
- ❧ Is integrated vertically (across all four years) and horizontally (in multiple first year courses, second year courses, etc.);
- ❧ Includes meaningful and sustainable assessments;
- ❧ Offers added value to faculty and programs;


Guiding Principles



- ❧ Includes strong coordination and support;
- ❧ Balances coordination with faculty and program responsibility;
- ❧ Builds on work that is in progress;
- ❧ Leverages the existing talent and expertise of faculty, programs, and centers/initiatives; and
- ❧ Creates opportunities and possibilities for cross-disciplinary collaboration.

FGCUScholars:

Focus for the Plan



- ❧ To integrate a common understanding of writing, critical thinking, and information literacy across all four years
- ❧ To build a foundation for writing, critical thinking, and information literacy in General Education
- ❧ To advance student learning in these areas in the majors so that students become “scholars” in their disciplines
- ❧ To assess student learning across four years of study and in every major.

FGCUScholars:

Focus for the Plan



- ❧ Based on an Undergraduate Research Model
 - ❧ “An inquiry or investigation conducted by an undergraduate student that makes an original intellectual or creative contribution to the discipline.”
- ❧ Research model expanded using Boyer’s *Scholarship Reconsidered*
 - ❧ Scholarship defined as “A variety of creative work carried on in a variety of places . . . its integrity measured by the ability to think, communicate, and learn.”
 - ❧ Includes four functions: scholarship of discovery, integration, application, and teaching.

FGCUScholars: Benefits



- ❧ Supports two university-required Learning Goals
- ❧ Facilitates participation in the development and use of a common language relating to Writing, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy
- ❧ Facilitates participation in the development of a shared process for teaching and assessing Writing, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy
- ❧ Provides students with a learning experience that is coherent across four years.

FGCUScholars: Writing



Best Practice: Writing in the Disciplines

- ✧ Give students practical writing tasks, often formal papers, that allow them to practice writing skills
- ✧ Focus is on learning and practicing the writing conventions within a particular area of study
- ✧ Advances both critical thinking and information literacy, from within the discipline.

FGCUScholars: Writing



Recommendations from Best Practice:

- ✧ Begins in Composition II courses
- ✧ Expands in General Education courses
- ✧ Fully developed in Undergraduate Majors

- ✧ Development of reading, researching, and writing within targeted courses in the major
- ✧ Leads to a major project in capstone course

FGCUScholars: Critical Thinking



Best Practice: Definition of Critical Thinking

- ❧ Thinking about how we think: identifying background assumptions that may influence our thoughts;
- ❧ Critically assessing whether or not these assumptions are valid;
- ❧ Engaging these assumptions from multiple perspectives; and
- ❧ Remaining open to revision and self-correction.


FGCUScholars: Critical Thinking



Three Models from Review of Best Practice:

- ❧ **The Solo Approach** leads to the development of a stand alone critical thinking course.
- ❧ **The Integrative Approach** connects critical thinking to writing and information literacy.
- ❧ **The Pedagogical Methods Approach** would parallel the use of writing assignments and lead to the development of a suite of model assignments and classroom activities that foster critical thinking skills.


FGCUScholars: Information Literacy



Best Practice: Association of College and Research Libraries Definition of Information Literacy

✧ Information Literacy is the ability to “recognize when information is needed and ... locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.”

FGCUScholars: Information Literacy



Recommendations from Best Practice:

- ❧ Integrate IL teaching and assessment throughout the university curriculum
- ❧ Assess IL competency through varied means, with focus on authentic performance assessments of research papers or portfolios using rubrics
- ❧ Share responsibility of IL teaching and assessment between library and faculty members outside of the library.

FGCUScholars: Curriculum Design

Best Practice: Backwards Design Approach

☞ Three Stage Process:

- ☞ Identify desired results (what our students will know, be able to do, etc.)
- ☞ Determine acceptable evidence and develop a meaningful assessment module
- ☞ Plan learning experiences and instruction that will lead to the desired results.

FGCUScholars: Curriculum Design

Vertical and Horizontal Design – Lower Level

❧ Beginning:

❧ Composition I and II

❧ New course on Critical Thinking

❧ Middle I:

❧ General Education Gordon Rule courses

❧ Mandated Gen Ed courses in one area (humanities, social sciences, etc.)

❧ New courses in General Education

FGCUScholars: Curriculum Design

Vertical and Horizontal Design – Upper Level

∞ Middle II:

∞ Gateway courses

∞ Junior level courses in the Major

∞ University Colloquium: A Sustainable Future

∞ To build on work that is ongoing

∞ End: Capstone courses

FGCUScholars: Curriculum Design

Tiered Writing, Critical Thinking, and Information Literacy courses

- ❧ W/CT/IL Focused courses – main objective is to teach the skills of W/CT/IL
- ❧ W/CT/IL Intensive courses – main objective is to teach specific course content using W/CT/IL as the primary method of student engagement and assessment
- ❧ W/CT/IL Enriched courses – main objective is to teach specific course content using W/CT/IL as one major method of student engagement and assessment
- ❧ Specific course caps for each type of course
- ❧ Learning communities for each type of course
- ❧ Teaching/grading assistance, peer mentors, graduate students from a variety of disciplines.

FGCUScholars: Coordination



Central Coordination of the QEP

- ❧ Office, Initiative, Institute, Center
- ❧ Professional Development for Faculty
- ❧ Coordination of Assessment
- ❧ Work closely with other established entities:
 - ❧ Writing Center
 - ❧ Library
 - ❧ Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship
 - ❧ Teaching, Learning, Assessment Initiative
 - ❧ Center for Academic Achievement

FGCUScholars: Faculty Scholars

- Centrality of Programs and Faculty in their disciplines
 - ❧ Build on and enhance work that is currently ongoing
 - ❧ Offer support and development
 - ❧ Creation of FGCU Faculty Scholars Program
 - ❧ Means of building cross-disciplinary teams
 - ❧ One (or more) FGCU Faculty Scholar(s) per program
 - ❧ Course release, stipend, summer institute

FGCUScholars: Assessment



Assessment and Continuous Improvement

- ❧ Key factors in a successful QEP
- ❧ Use of standardized (validated) rubric
 - ❧ AAC&U Rubrics
 - ❧ Composition I and II Assessments
 - ❧ University-wide Writing Assessment
- ❧ Use of standardized testing
- ❧ SACS, Professional Accrediting Bodies, Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA)

Next Steps



- ❧ More Feedback: QEP Website and QEP Angel Page
- ❧ Faculty and Program Input and Feedback Reviewed by Steering Committee
- ❧ Development of a “Focus” for the FGCU QEP
- ❧ Fall 2013 – Institutional Sharing and Feedback
 - ❧ Finalize the Plan
 - ❧ Develop Implementation Plan and Budget
 - ❧ More Sharing and Feedback
- ❧ End of Fall 2013 – Send to Administration for Review

Bibliography



❧ Important Websites:

- ❧ FGCU's QEP Website: <http://www.fgcu.edu/qep/>
- ❧ Southern Association of Colleges and Schools:
<http://sacscoc.org/>
- ❧ Council on Undergraduate Research:
<http://www.cur.org/>
- ❧ Association of College and Research Libraries:
<http://www.ala.org/acrl/>
- ❧ American Association of Colleges and Universities:
<http://www.aacu.org/>

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Some Important Resources:

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- ☞ Maki, Peggy L. *Assessing for Learning: Building a sustainable commitment across the curriculum*. 2nd edition. Stylus Publishing, 2004.
- ☞ Moore, B. N. & Parker, R. *Critical Thinking*. McGraw Hill, 2011.
- ☞ Rockman, I. F. *Integrating information literacy into the higher education curriculum: Practical models for transformation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.